

## CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT

### Report of the Head of Education and Learning

*Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.*

**Recommendation:** That the Cabinet welcome and endorse the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report and arrangements be made for the report (and supporting reports) to be published on the Council's website.

#### 1. Background

It is a statutory duty to secure sufficient early years and childcare places.

- 1.1 Sufficiency is met through a variety of providers that includes all types of schools, pre-schools, day nurseries, holiday clubs, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, childminders, etc. These provisions are within the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors.
- 1.2 Early years places are for under-five-year-olds. Some two-year-olds and all three- and four-year-olds are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant to access 570 hours of education a year (equivalent of 15 hours per week term time).
- 1.3 Some three- and four-year-olds of working families are eligible for an additional 570 hours of childcare per year. This is an annual total of 1140 hours of early education and childcare.
- 1.4 Childcare places are for 0-14-year-olds (or up to 18 years old for disabled children). This provision is paid for by parents.
- 1.5 The local authority should take into account what is "reasonably practicable" when assessing what sufficient childcare means.
- 1.6 [\*The Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities\*](#), sets out that the local authority should report annually to elected Council Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents.
- 1.7 The report must contain information about the supply and demand of childcare for all children aged 0-5 and out of school and holiday care for school aged children including children with a disability or special education needs. The report considers the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision and how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.
- 1.8 This is the seventh Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual report; last year's report was approved by cabinet in October 2018 and can be found here: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/eycs/providers/childcare-sufficiency/childcare-sufficiency-assessment>

#### 2. The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Reports

- 2.1 There is one report and an executive summary.
- 2.2 The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2018/19 (Appendix 1), which is brought before Cabinet for endorsement, encapsulates key findings from data relating to 2018/19 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019) and actions for the Early Years and Childcare Service for 2019/20.

### 3. Key Findings

- 3.1 The data analysis indicates that overall there is sufficient early years and childcare provision within Devon. Although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varies. [Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots](#) have been identified.
- 3.2 The number of providers has increased this year (+64), but the number of places available has decreased (-666). However, the population of under-five-year-olds has also decreased slightly by 0.3% (-99) across Devon. This has resulted in the level of provision (number of FTE places to population) slightly decreasing this year, although the Early Years and Childcare Service determine there to be sufficient provision overall across Devon.
- 3.3 100% of Devon County Councils administrative area is within a five-mile radius of childcare provision and 99% is within a five-mile radius of funded provision.
- 3.4 Although the number of providers offering funded places for two-, three- and four-year-olds has decreased this year, the number of places available has increased.
- 3.5 The percentage of 2-year olds taking up a funded place has remained high at 89.0%.
- 3.6 There continues to be a high percentage of 3 and 4-year olds taking up the early years education funding (96.0%).
- 3.7 The take-up of the Early Years Funding by those two-year-olds in local authority care has increased from 71.4% to 93.8% and for three- and four-year-olds in care has increased from 95.0% to 100.0%.
- 3.8 There has continued to be a growth in the number of providers who are offering the extended entitlement with 92.9% of providers reporting that a child who is eligible for the extended entitlement could be funded to attend their provision for more than 15 hours a week. This has increased by 3% over the last year.
- 3.9 The take-up of the extended entitlement has increased from 41.8% in Spring 2018 to 44.3% in Spring 2019. This is an increase from 70.6% to 70.9% of those estimated to be eligible.
- 3.10 From April 2018, the funding rate for three- and four-year-olds increased from £4.02 to £4.06 which included Universal SEND funding and from September 2018 increased to £4.08 to include deprivation funding.
- 3.11 The percentage of providers graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted remains higher than both the South West and the National average (Devon 97.2% - March 2019, National 95.2%, South West 96.7% - December 2018).
- 3.12 A higher proportion of children in Devon (71.7%) achieved a Good Level of Development than the national average (71.5%) (measured by the Foundation Stage Profile 2017).
- 3.13 All providers have been encouraged and supported to register with HMRC so they can accept tax free childcare payments, making childcare more affordable for families. 83.4% of all providers responding to the Annual Survey of Providers reported that they had registered to be able to receive payments from the Tax Free Childcare scheme. This has increased from 78.5% in 2017/18.
- 3.14 There continues to be increased and improved communication with providers through social media platforms. The number of subscribers to the [Early Years Weekly Digest](#), number of likes of the Early Years and Childcare [Facebook Page](#), the number of followers to the Early Years and Childcare Service [Twitter page](#) and the number of connections to the [LinkedIn Showcase](#) has increased;.

#### **4. Actions arising from the report**

##### **The Early Years and Childcare service will:**

- Continue to assess sufficiency and identify Hot Spots through data analysis and discussion on the supply and demand of childcare with locality teams.
- Carry out actions to address issues in Hot Spot Areas.
- Carry out actions identified from the [Annual Survey of Providers 2019](#)
- Survey parents to gain a greater insight into demand for childcare where there is insufficient provision or there are issues raised through data, by the locality teams or local families. This will be through an online survey promoted through social media.
- Promote the use of the '[unable to find childcare form](#)' to parents so that Devon County Council are informed where more places are needed.
- Carry out the Annual Survey of Providers in January 2020 through the Provider Self Update service on the Early Years Portal.
- Continue to promote the take up of funded two-, three- and four-year-old places to parents as well as the importance of taking up the full entitlement.
- Continue to promote the take-up of the extended entitlement to 1140 hours of funded childcare for eligible three- and four-year-olds.
- Monitor the take up of funded places and hours (two-year-old funding, universal funding, extended entitlement).
- Monitor the impact of the extended entitlement on the number of places for two-year-olds.
- Promote the stretched offer to working parents to help with spreading the cost of childcare across the year.
- Promote the take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium to parents and providers.
- Capture information on school run childcare that is not Ofsted registered (*governor run out of school clubs*).
- Raise the awareness of providers right to request the use of school sites for early years and childcare provision.
- Raise awareness of parents right to request that a school provides childcare.
- Monitor openings, closures and expansions.
- Finalise the Early Years Infrastructure Plan.

#### **5. Options/Alternatives**

No other options were considered.

#### **6. Financial Considerations**

There are no additional cost implications to the report actions which will be implemented by the Early Years and Childcare Service.

#### **7. Legal Considerations**

There no specific legal considerations in relation to the annual report, key findings or actions arising from the report.

#### **8. Environmental Impact Conditions**

There are no specific environmental related issues arising from the report, key findings and proposed actions for the coming year.

#### **9. Equality Considerations**

The actions arising from the Childcare Sufficiency Report contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Sufficiency Assessment Report considers accessibility and affordability of childcare for all families and includes consideration of disabled children, families on low incomes and parents working irregular hours. Early years and childcare provision is registered and inspected by Ofsted and they are required to comply with all legislation relating to anti-discrimination, safeguarding, employment and health and safety. The inspection will assess the extent to which the provider complies with all legal duties including those set out in the Equality Act 2010 and will pay particular

attention to the educational outcomes for specific groups of children which includes all children with protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010). The actions identified for the coming year are a continuation of the ongoing work of the Early Years and Childcare service in promoting equality of opportunity for all families through provision of accessible, affordable, childcare.

## **10. Risk Management Considerations**

No risks have been identified.

## **11. Public Health Impact**

The report identifies that there are sufficient early years and childcare services for families. This should have a positive impact on public health as families can be supported through early years and childcare providers who enable parents to go to work or training and can signpost to other support if required.

## **12. Reasons for recommendation**

Data analysis for the Childcare Sufficiency Report indicates that the local authority met the early years and childcare sufficiency duty in Devon in 2018/19.

To continue to ensure the duty is met in 2019/20 the main areas of focus will be:

- Ensuring sufficient places for 2-year olds and marketing and promotion of this entitlement.
- Ensuring sufficient places for the increase of the Early Years Entitlement to 1140 hours a year for 3 and 4-year olds of working families.
- Raising the quality of funded places– specifically those judged as Requires Improvement and Inadequate by Ofsted.
- Meeting the need for early years and childcare places where there are new housing developments.
- Ensure sufficient early years and childcare provision for children with disabilities and special education needs.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS  
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[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report 2018/19](#)  
[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Summary 2018/19](#)